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TAGS: PREL PGOV IZ
SUBJECT: HIGH-LEVEL TASK FORCE MEETS ON DIBS ISSUES

REF: A. BAGHDAD 3366
 IB. BAGHDAD 3362

Classified By: A/DCM Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4. (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The High-Level Task Force (HLTF) - a contact group of GOI, KRG and UN officials run under the auspices of UNAMI to address issues in the disputed internal boundary (DIBs) areas - met on December 23. Sadiq Rikabi (advisor to PM Maliki) and Faruq Abdullah (an Iraqi Turkoman and former member of the Iraqi Turkoman Front) represented the GOI; COR Legal Committee and PUK member Khaled Shwany represented the KRG (senior KRG representative Rowsch Shaways did not attend). UNAMI Poloffs told Emboffs the meeting focused on the following issues: 1) making progress on the right of Kurdish children to be educated in more than one language; 2) making progress on evacuating schools in Kirkuk currently occupied by political parties and other property issues, and; 3) encouraging a larger UNAMI role in handling the detention of non-Kurds by Kurdish elements in areas outside recognized KRG areas. The HLTF's members agreed to hold one more formal meeting, likely in mid-January, before national elections on March 7. Work with Faruq Abdullah and Khaled Shwany will meanwhile continue outside the formal meetings. In addition, SRSG Ad Melkert plans to travel to Kirkuk during the second week of January to reinforce efforts to resolve property disputes.

¶2. (C) On education, the KRG and GOI agreed to designate senior points of contact within their respective ministries of health to coordinate on facilitating Kurdish-language instruction in GOI-funded schools in the DIBs areas. On property, the Kirkuk Provincial Council formed a committee on December 22 to explore ways to accelerate the evacuation of schools in Kirkuk that have been occupied by political parties. Unlike residential property disputes, the political parties would not have to be compensated for evacuating the properties, theoretically making it easier to move quickly. Najjar said the Council of Representatives (COR) has agreed in principle to amend the law defining the GOI's Commission for the Resolution of Property Disputes (CPRD) to allow for the establishment of three subcommittees that would (in principle) intensify property dispute resolution efforts in northern, central and southern Iraq, respectively. (Comment: With the COR's term fast dwindling and elections approaching, it is unclear whether this will be taken up. End comment.)

¶3. (C) On detainees, the KRG is willing to check on the status and provenance of individual detainees if their names are provided; however, it claims it has received no names to date. (Note: The issue of non-Kurds detained by KRG forces in the DIBs areas and then transferred to the KRG for detention and, in some cases, trial has increasingly become a point of friction between Kurds and non-Kurds in the DIBs areas. End note.) UNAMI, GOI and KRG representatives confirmed that the Ministry of Human Rights (MOHR) had refused to share with them copies of a recent report on its inspection of prisons in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR). As reported reftel, the report documents allegations by detainees that they were detained by Kurdish assayesh in DIBs and adjacent areas and

transported to the KRG. In a related issue, Sadiq Rikabi expressed interest in promoting the idea of "local and representative" security forces in the DIBs. (Note: As reported ref B, DPM Issawi's Ninewa initiative includes a provision for hiring an ethnically representative cadre of 14,000 local residents into Ninewa's Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police units to give residents a stake in their security and blunt KRG claims that large numbers of Kurdish peshmerga and assayesh are needed there because the IA and IP are unable to maintain adequate security. End note.)

¶4. (C) COMMENT: The HLTF has moved at a deliberate pace and seems to have agreed that little further progress on key DIBs issues is likely before the upcoming national election. In consultation with UNAMI, we will need to identify DIBs-related matters that we can push forward on after the elections and during the period of government formation.

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